

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

- (a) an intelligent peripheral receiving an alert message, from a database unit that received a request from a switch to perform a service for a call, which message specifies a communications protocol for subsequent communication between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral;
- (b) with reference to a database within said intelligent peripheral, establishing a connection between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral to operate in accord with a protocol pointed to by said protocol parameter,
- (c) communicating information between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral; and
- (d) communicating information between ~~[[a]]~~ said switch and said intelligent peripheral over a bearer connection between them that is established for effecting said service, and associated with said call.

2 – 15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

- a switch receiving a call;
- said switch sending information pertaining to said call to a control element;
- based on said information, said control element identifying a service to be performed;
- said control element sending to an intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral an alert message specifying a protocol to be used in subsequent interactions between the intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral and the database;
- in response to said alert message, the intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral selecting, from among a stored plurality of software modules, a software module for employing in implementing said interactions between the intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral and the database according to the protocol specified in said alert message;

said control element sending to said switch a message informing said switch of a bearer connection set up between said switch and said intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral; setting up said bearer connection;

said ~~controller~~ control element sending a message, employing said protocol, to said intelligent peripheral, requesting that one or more tasks to be performed that make up said service;

said intelligent peripheral performing said one or more tasks, employing said bearer connection as necessary;

said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed; and

dismantling said bearer connection.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim **16** where said alert message is devoid of any request to perform any task pertaining to said call.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **16** where function of said alert message is solely to establish a protocol between said intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral and said control element.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim **16** where said protocol is the SR3511 protocol or an ITU-T protocol.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **16** where said bearer connection establishes a communication path from said intelligent ~~processor~~ peripheral, via said switch, to another party.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim **16** where said step of said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed is preceded by a step of said intelligent peripheral sending results of said one or more tasks to said control element.